

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, or claims in this application:

Listing of Claims:

- 5 1. (Original) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel and wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof.
- 10 2. (Original) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first and second bores are partially overlapping to provide a channel therebetween.
- 15 3. (Currently amended) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1 ~~or Claim 2~~, wherein the main bore is located centrally on the body.
- 20 4. (Currently amended) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1 ~~any preceding Claims~~, wherein the portion of the main bore includes an entry port, the entry port having a first aperture equal to the diameter of the first bore and a second aperture having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore, the apertures being aligned with the first and second bores respectively.
- 25 5. (Original) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the entry port is inclined with respect to the main bore.
6. (Currently amended) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 4 ~~when dependent on Claim 2~~, wherein the second aperture has a diameter substantially equal to the width of the channel.
- 30 7. (Currently amended) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1 ~~any preceding Claim~~, wherein the restraining means is a third bore coaxially aligned with the first bore and having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore.
- 35 8. (Currently amended) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1 ~~any preceding Claim~~, wherein the second bore is located centrally on the body.

9. (Original) A method of selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, comprising the steps:

- (a) inserting in a tool string a ball catcher including a first bore having retaining means and a second bore passing therethrough, the bores including an overlapping portion to provide a channel therebetween;
- (b) dropping a first ball of a first diameter through the tool string;
- (c) directing the first ball into the first bore; and
- (d) retaining the first ball in the first bore.

10. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method further includes the steps of:

- (a) dropping a second ball of a second diameter, the second diameter being smaller than the first diameter through the tool string;
- (b) directing the second ball into the first bore;
- (c) passing the second ball through the channel into the second bore; and
- (d) releasing the second ball from the ball catcher into the tool string.

11. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method further includes the steps:

- (a) dropping a second ball of a second diameter, the second diameter being smaller than the first diameter through the tool string;
- (b) passing the second ball through the second bore; and
- (c) releasing the second ball from the ball catcher into the tool string.

12. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in Claim 9 ~~any one of Claims 9 to 11~~, wherein the method includes the step of passing a tool through the second bore into the tool string below the ball catcher.

13. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in Claim 9 ~~any one of Claims 9 to 12~~, wherein the method includes the step of actuating a tool above the ball catcher with the first ball.

14. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in Claim 10 ~~any one of Claims 10 to 13~~, wherein the method includes the step of actuating a tool below the ball catcher with the second ball.